

Theme: When Christ calls us through the Gospel, He calls us into local churches where we can be protected, strengthened and equipped by those whom Christ has saved and called to be leaders in the church.

I. Intro – A Big Day Today!

- A. We will be ordaining Jeff Hook as an elder
- B. Important event in the life of a local church
- C. But some today deny need for the local church
- D. And some deny need for 'official' leaders
- E. How did church function in NT?

II. Called To Christ Through the Gospel

- A. The basic task - preach the Gospel (Acts 14:21)
 - 1. The apostles main task is preaching the Gospel
 - 2. This verb is used 15x in Acts!
 - 3. Includes apostles and all believers
 - a. Apostles - v21; Acts 5:41-42
 - b. Believers - Acts 8:1,4; 11:19-20
 - 4. This was their task - and it is ours!
- B. The result - God calls people to Christ
 - 1. A large number of disciples - v21
 - 2. Literally 'made disciples of many'
 - 3. As we preach, God calls people to Christ!
- C. This is the basic call for Christians - to Christ

- 1. We hear and respond and follow Christ
- 2. We then go tell others

III. Called To A Local Church

- A. The apostles return to strengthen believers (vv 21-22)
 - 1. Return to visit those who had responded
 - 2. Three major things noted
 - a. Strengthened their souls - built up their walk
 - b. Encouraged to remain in THE faith - trained, equipped
 - c. Warned of persecutions - prepare for struggle; help
 - 3. Every Christian needs these things - then and now
- B. These things were done in local churches (v23)
 - 1. Each church - clear in the Greek - v23
 - 2. Commit each member of these churches to Lord
 - 3. Trust - same root word as faith in v22
- C. Called to Christ is also a call to a local church
 - 1. This is not optional - vital for our spiritual health
 - 2. To do this we must:
 - a. Be committed to gather for worship
 - b. Be committed to pray, give, and serve local church
 - c. Be committed to walk in unity with leaders and the local church
 - d. Be committed to building relationships in local church
 - e. Be committed to serve others - in meetings and life

3. For more - 121014 - "Universal and Local Church"

IV. The Call for Leaders

A. The pattern - elders in each church (Acts 14:23)

1. Always plural elders in NT (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5)
2. Several titles, one office (Acts 20:17,28; 1 Pet 5:1-2)
3. NT pattern is always a group of leaders

B. The functions on NT elders

1. To care for/serve local church - shepherd (1 Pet 5:1-2)
2. Feed the local church the Word (Titus 1:9)
3. To protect local church from error (Acts 20:28-30)
4. Govern & lead local church (1 Tim 5:17) [Heb 13:17]
5. Equip believers to do ministry (Eph 4:11-12)

C. Elders continue ministry role of apostles

1. Elders are NOT apostles successors - there are none!
2. But they are called to strengthen, encourage, warn
3. Apostles and elders - 6 times in Acts 15:1-16:4

V. Applying the Word

A. Have you heard the call to Christ?

1. This is the most important call!
2. He has worked salvation for you - hear His call!
3. He sends the word of the Gospel - hear His call!

4. He is still powerful to save - hear His call!

B. Have you heard the call of Christ to a local church?

1. There is no call to Christ that does not include local church
2. Are you a vital, functioning, faithful member of BRCC?
3. Don't think you are faithful to Christ apart from local church

C. The call for a leader - Jeff Hook ordination

Called To the Church

Acts 14:21-23
January 1, 2012
Jeff Hook Ordination & Communion
Hebrews 13:20-21

41 The **apostles** left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. 42 Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they **never stopped** teaching and **proclaiming the good news** that Jesus is the Christ. Acts 5:41–42

1 On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and **all except the apostles were scattered** throughout Judea and Samaria.... 4 **Those who had been scattered preached the word** wherever they went. Acts 8:1, 4

Now **those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen** traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. 20**Some of them**, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, **telling them the good news** about the Lord Jesus. Acts 11:19–20

The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and **appoint elders in every town**, as I directed you. Titus 1:5

From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the **elders** of the church. 28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**. Be **shepherds** of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. Acts 20:17, 28

1 To the **elders** among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be **shepherds** of God's flock that is under your care, serving as **overseers** — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; 1 Peter 5:1–2

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He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. Titus 1:9

28 **Keep watch** over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be **shepherds** of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, **savage wolves** will come in among you and **will not spare the flock**. 30Even from your own number men will arise and **distort the truth** in order to draw away disciples after them. Acts 20:28–30

The **elders who direct the affairs of the church** well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. 1 Timothy 5:17

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, Ephesians 4:11–12 (ESV)